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## Georgia Southern University builds tribute to Armstrong athletics

October 12, 2021



Rendering of the Armstrong Athletic Hall of Champions (by PRAXIS3).

Georgia Southern University is building a new home to celebrate the athletic successes of Armstrong State University with a hall of champions now under construction on Georgia Southern's Armstrong Campus in Savannah.

The facility will serve as the permanent host for the Armstrong Athletic Hall of Fame, championship trophies and banners honoring the legacy of Pirate athletics. It is located in an approximately 650-square foot space in the front lobby of the Armstrong Recreation Center, which was built in 1995 as the Armstrong Sports Center and once served as the home of Armstrong State men's and women's basketball and housed the Armstrong Athletics offices.

Construction should be completed by the end of the year. The facility will include branded displays of the Armstrong Athletics Hall of Fame, as well as championship banners that hung from the rafters of Alumni Arena. These banners will be displayed on a wall built from the original wood floor of the Armstrong Basketball Gym, constructed in 1965 when the school moved to the Southside campus.

Four trophy display areas feature all 11 NCAA Division II National Championship tennis trophies, the four Peach Belt Conference Commissioner's Cup and President's Cup trophies, graphical displays of memorable moments in the history of Pirate athletics and a representative selection of trophies from all 12 sports sponsored by Armstrong State.

A list of all 316 All-Americans will be displayed on the north wall, framing two interactive digital display screens that will tell the history of Pirate athletics.

The Armstrong Hall of Champions will be formally unveiled to the public in a ribbon-cutting ceremony tentatively scheduled for Friday, January 14. Details should be finalized in November.

Lisa Sweany, who served as the athletic director at Armstrong State University from 2011 to 2017 and is now associate vice president for administration in Georgia Southern's Division of Student Affairs, said the Armstrong Hall of Champions will be a place to celebrate the former student-athletes, coaches and administrators who contributed to Armstrong State University's history.

"Armstrong State athletics has a rich tradition of success, both athletically and academically," Sweany said. "A sincere appreciation to the university administration, particularly President Marrero and Dr. Little, for championing this cause to recognize the excellence of Pirate athletics. I'm honored to have been a small part of the 50-year journey and I'm excited to be a part of this project, bringing the much-deserved recognition to the Pirate athletics family."

The University System of Georgia Board of Regents consolidated Armstrong State University and Georgia Southern University officially on Jan. 1, 2018. The name of the new, consolidated institution is Georgia Southern University.

"As a member of the GSU Athletics Foundation Board of Trustees, and an Armstrong alum and basketball letterman, I could not be more excited about the Armstrong Hall of Champions project on the Armstrong campus," said Cliff McCurry, a Savannah businessman and longtime athletics supporter. "Not only will this include an updated Armstrong Athletic Hall of Fame, but it will also include an extensive display celebrating the proud history of Armstrong athletics. I am very grateful to University President Dr. Kyle Marrero and Athletic Director Jared Benko for their commitment to remembering our Armstrong student-athletes over the past 50 years, and to bringing back athletic competition to Savannah in the years ahead."

Creating the Armstrong Hall of Champions was simply the right thing to do, said Georgia Southern President Kyle Marrero.

"We are one university now, but our campuses and our alumni and our histories have their own stories," Marrero said. "We need to acknowledge and appreciate the Armstrong legacy and the role it has played in the regionally important university we have today."

Armstrong State University celebrated its 50th Anniversary of Pirate Athletics in 2016-17, which coincided with the school's transition to four-year university status. At the time of the consolidation, Armstrong State University was a premier NCAA Division II collegiate athletic program, featuring 11 National Champions, 97 Peach Belt Conference Champions, 148 NCAA Championships Appearances and 316 All-Americans.

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